

grumblers among the new as among the former patients. I attribute the general contentment largely to the ample and well-cooked food, plenty of occupation and amusements, and the reduction to a minimum of all irritating and really unnecessary restrictions.

I cannot close this imperfect account of the revolutionary upheaval which has taken place in 10 *per cent.* of our asylums during the past nine months without voicing a tribute from the Presidential Chair to the arduous work of the two Commissioners of the Board of Control, Dr. Marriott Cooke and Dr. Hubert Bond, to whom that Board delegated the important duty of acting as intermediaries in all the negotiations between the War Department and the vacating and receiving asylums. It is not for me to appraise the value of that work, but the small portion of it affecting the institution of which I have charge gives me some idea of the magnitude and high quality of their task to which they must have devoted long and laborious hours.

(<sup>1</sup>) Read at the Quarterly Meeting of the Medico-Psychological Association in London, November 23rd, 1915.

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*The Biological Significance of Delusions.*<sup>(1)</sup> By HENRY DEVINE, M.D., Medical Superintendent, Portsmouth Mental Hospital.

THE purpose of this paper is to develop the thought that delusional formations fulfil a definite function; they are the expression of certain underlying trends in the individual, and they satisfy certain needs. At the present time there is a reaction against the tendency to regard classification as the ultimate aim of clinical psychiatry. While the separation of mental disorders into certain broad groups has its obvious uses, it is being recognised that classification in itself is not a very vital point, and it does not take us far in the understanding of our cases. Not only is each case a member of a particular group, but in a certain sense it is an entity in itself; the odd behaviour, the delusions and hallucinations, have an individual significance; they are the outgrowth of personal conflicts and aspirations, and the whole psychosis is no more than one form of reaction to experience.

The general significance of some delusional conditions may be indicated by reference to certain normal mental activities, such as day-dreams or reveries, which have not only a similar psychological structure to delusions, but the same biological function. Every individual possesses needs or impulses which seek gratification; these constitute the motives for conduct. Thus everyone has desires for wealth, fame, or knowledge, all of which may be included under the term "ambitious complex." In the highest type of mental organisation these desires are co-ordinated with reality, and the individual maintains a constant struggle to attain his ends. Such adaptation to reality is, however, the most difficult psychic operation, and this high level of conduct cannot always be maintained; there is a tendency, therefore, to turn away from facts as they exist, and to gratify inner tendencies by seeking refuge in inferior mental operations. Thus the tired man after the work of the day seeks distraction at the theatre. As a spectator at the musical comedy he lives in an atmosphere of romance, which forms a contrast to his commonplace existence, and thus gratifies certain hidden desires and ambitions. He identifies himself with the hero of the play, and shares his troubles and triumphs. The same ætiology is seen in the case of day-dreams. The tendency to reveries in children is favoured by circumstances which render external conditions monotonous and difficult, and the same tendency is seen in the case of psychasthenics, who, owing to an inability to adapt themselves to their social environment, often elaborate extremely complicated, romantic, and ambitious reveries. Thus the biological function of these mental operations is to afford an escape from reality, to gratify wishes which are impossible of fulfilment under the actual conditions of existence. Furthermore, the less the individual is able to gratify his ambitious complexes by efficient action, the more will he tend to seek compensation by falling back into these inferior modes of mental activity.

Delusional states have, not infrequently, a similar significance. An individual is placed in a situation to which he cannot adapt himself, and he unconsciously seeks refuge in a psychosis, the content of which shows clearly the mechanism of "wish-fulfilment." Thus a congenital deaf-mute, stunted, deformed, and ugly, who has been brought up in the workhouse,

develops the following delusions. She imagines she had been stolen away at birth, and is really the daughter of certain exalted personages. Those around her are malignant persecutors with the exception of the medical officer, on whom she proposes to bestow her hand. She relates various indignities to which she has been subjected, but in spite of these she sits all day long with a rapturous expression and a smile of superiority. She explains that her ugly appearance is only a disguise due to a spell which has been cast upon her by her enemies; before long she will be "infruated," this neologism meaning that the spell will be removed, and she will emerge as a beautiful girl, with long golden hair. Reality in this case is summed up by a hideous form, deaf-mutism, with its hindrance to companionship, and the grey outlook of workhouse life. Contrasted with all this, however, she possessed just the same natural desire for admiration, craving for affection, and instinct for maternity as any ordinary girl. These hidden desires had obtained gratification by invading and transforming the personality. The patient had sought refuge in a psychosis.

Other instances might be cited in which there is an obvious antagonism between desire and circumstance, but this example suffices to indicate that in some psychoses (*defence psychoses*) there is quite obviously an attempt at adjustment to external difficulties in the direction of "wish-fulfilment." It is by no means usual, however, to establish such an obvious correlation between the situations to which an individual has been subjected and the delusional content. In dementia præcox, for instance, the casual observer gains the impression that the ideation is utterly chaotic and meaningless, and that the delusions expressed are a haphazard array of fantastic notions.

When these cases are investigated, however, it is found that such an opinion is scarcely justified. It has been demonstrated that there is no diminution of mental activity or actual destruction of psychic functions, such as occurs in plainly organic disorders, of which dementia paralytica is an example, in cases of the dementia præcox group, but merely a direction of the thoughts inward, with a corresponding lack of interest in external affairs. When analysed it is found that these patients have only adopted a peculiar view of their own, and that the delusions have a meaning and purpose analogous to the inferior forms of mental activity which have already been cited.

The obscurity and incoherence of thought in the precocious dement is thus not due to dementia in its narrow sense, but is accounted for as follows: In the first place, the individual suffering from dementia præcox does not of necessity succumb to circumstances of any particular difficulty, but, owing to internal conflicts, he is unable to adjust himself to ordinary situations. The fault lies in the make-up of an individual rather than in his circumstances. It follows, therefore, that the delusions are subjectively determined, and they relate to intimate personal matters, the nature of which is not apparent on the surface. In the second place, the inner tendencies which seek expression do so in such a distorted manner that their meaning is far from obvious. Just as the manifest content of dreams is only the symbol for some hidden concrete thought, so the delusions in dementia præcox are the expression of actual impulses or desires which obtrude themselves indirectly into consciousness; the indirect expression being due to the repressive force exercised by the normal personality, or such remnants of it as exist unimpaired. Thus, when one of Jung's patients said, "I am the double polytechnic irretrievable," she meant, "I am the best tailoress."

To make these points clear I propose to give some extracts from the analysis of an actual case, the study of which has recently been engaging my attention. The analysis has been undertaken by means of "word-association" tests and the method of "free association," upon the lines indicated by Jung, to whom, of course, we owe much of our knowledge of the psychological factors in dementia præcox. The subject of this investigation, a single man, æt. 32, has been in the asylum for four and a half years. The following facts of his history were elicited: At the age of 8 the patient lost his father, and his mother was left a widow with six children to support. The patient was the fourth child and the oldest son. He was described as "never very strong," and dull and reserved in character. He did well at school, and upon leaving he worked until the age of 19 at one situation. After this his work was most irregular, and for some time before entering the asylum he did practically nothing. He was then aged 28, and two years previously his mother had become insane, and she is still an inmate of the asylum. The patient was certified owing to delusions of persecution. He thought people were talking

about him, and he became strange and erratic in conduct. At the present time he is quiet and inoffensive, he does a little light work, interests himself to a moderate extent in the activities of the ward, and apparently lives a contented existence. He is ready to converse on general topics and displays a considerable knowledge of current events, but he soon diverges off the subject into fantastic delusional statements. He explains in a thoroughly cheerful manner that he is undergoing terrible torture from subconscious force, nature is hypnotised, his mind is filled with Chinese hypnotic supernature, he suffers from reflex action, bestiality is forced through him, moral agony is concentrated upon him, he has to be engulfed in the centre of gravity, and numerous other ideas of a like character. The diagnosis is obviously one of paranoid dementia præcox.

Now though these curious notions are loosely organised, with considerable pains it is possible to piece together a coherent delusional line of thought. This is briefly as follows: The whole of humanity, Nature and God Himself are under the influence of some malevolent "superomnipotent" power. This power takes the form of a "hypnotic supernature." Its effect is to destroy freedom of action in humanity, forcing people to act against their desires and making them constrained and ill at ease. The patient traces evidence of this in current movements, wars, plagues, labour unrest, and social injustice, detecting in general a tendency towards racial deterioration. Furthermore, this force has prevented the souls of men from dying, and thus there is a quantity of floating consciousness in Nature. Because the patient is a "moral degenerate with a pliable mind," he has been selected to play the chief rôle in this curious state of affairs. These living souls—chiefly Chinese—are now located in his consciousness, and inflict numerous tortures and indignities upon him. They inflict him with moral agony, and force bestiality through him. What are delusions to other people are made to him "a frightful reality." Thus, if another patient thinks he has a woman inside him, they actually put the spirit of a woman inside the patient himself. This state of affairs will shortly culminate in a "hypnotic war," and all the evil which is in him will be let loose on society. Five months of suffering will ensue, during which the world will be more or less disorganised, and the

patient himself will be regarded as the cause of all the trouble. He illustrates this by a concrete instance. Any sexual thoughts which have been forced into his mind will obtain actual fulfilment, women will become prostitutes, and will trace their downfall to him. Actually, however, he is only the chief victim, he is the medium through which the regeneration of society will be brought about. When the evil force has inflicted sufficient agony, it will be dispersed, and the patient will be free to wage an "inspiration moral war." Society will be purged through his sufferings. He will be the master power, the new Messiah. This brief outline indicates that the patient has constructed a complicated drama in which he is the central figure. The main theme is obviously regeneration through conflicts and suffering. Now, when this phantasy is analysed it becomes apparent that it represents the patient's own internal conflicts and aspirations. This will become clear if we study the most prominent delusional ideas, giving a few of the associations which appeared in the analysis.

The patient reiterates frequently the phrase, "*I am hypnotised by subconscious force of supernature.*" The following are some of his associations: "I am forced to do what I otherwise would not do. I once saw some Chinese wrestlers; one held the other down. I have always been held down. I never had any free will. It wasn't a disease, it was lack of will. I struggled against self-abuse; they would not let me give it up. I wished to break my self-consciousness, but the more I thought of my bad habit the more it became fixed on my mind; I lost the power of my nature, it was all from hypnotic force; I lacked power of action. It was an effort to walk in the street, a terror to ask for a job. If I had made one big moral effort the weight would have gone. I was never allowed to tell anyone. I daren't talk to a woman; if I had the pressure would have left me, I should have become a man. I could not prevent the wrongs and injustice about me." From these associations we see that when the patient says he is hypnotised, he refers to his volitional incapacity. The process is one of rationalisation—by a method of outward projection the responsibility is placed on some external agency. The following concrete reactions which the patient exhibits illustrate this mechanism quite clearly.

(a) When asked to work, the patient shows much hesitation

and says, "They put the hypnotic-idle-atrophy upon me, I can do nothing." He here rationalises the feelings of incapacity which are so common in psychasthenics when any form of activity is required.

(b) When he plays a game of billiards he says, "They put the hypnotic pressure on, and turn my eyes the least bit, so that I cannot hit the ball right." Here he rationalises feelings of self-consciousness which arise in the performance of delicate co-ordinations, and which, of course, prevent a completely efficient action. It means attention to movements which should be automatic, and is a common experience in nervous persons.

(c) In the word-association experiments, and sometimes in conversation, the patient fails to react at all; no word comes to his mind, or he loses the thread of his conversation. He explains in these instances, "They put the hypnotic break on me, and make my mind a blank." This "thought deprivation" is always found to be due to reminiscences about which the patient does not wish to think, and indicates the existence of submerged complexes. Such moments of obstruction to his thought were, no doubt, common enough in his daily life. As before, he explains them by reference to external agencies.

(d) Lastly, there is a tendency for his thoughts to become automatic. He loses control over them, and they appear in consciousness against his will. These forced reveries, to which he has been subject for many years, constitute one of the chief reasons for his notion of being hypnotised. The expression, "Nightmares are forced on to me," illustrates this. These experiences will be further elucidated when his hallucinations are considered.

A further notion which the patient expresses is one relating to the Chinese. Thus he says, "*I have Chinese souls in my mind.*" These are some of his associations: "I have been submitted to a drumhead trial from Chinese Machiavellis. It was a trial without defence; they could accuse me of what they liked, there was no retaliation. What the Chinese have been through as a nation corresponds to me as an individual. The Chinese believe in the transmigration of souls. They were hypnotised under opium, it distorted their minds and took away the death agony; I have driven my thoughts in with cigarettes, it eased my fears, but forced me to dream

bestial nightmares; if a man smokes it forces bad habits (masturbation) on to his mind, he cannot give them up. Cigarettes destroy life by taking away a little bit of super-happiness. The Chinese are small, their houses and trees are stunted, they are hypnotised like me with opium. The Chinese were trodden upon by European nations, they had to work other people's minds like me. The Chinese were allowed to go to ruin; no one was allowed to help me, they were manipulated against it. The Chinese are descended from Hagar, a bond-woman; my mother is the mother of Chinese, she was left a widow to fight for herself. Before the revolution the chief power of China went to America. I was afraid to take any risk; my brother, who had more courage, went to America, and struck out a new line for himself." The patient, however, has some more hopeful associations. He describes how, since the revolution, the Chinese are breaking their bad habits, cutting off their pigtailed, and so on. This is connected with the thought that the patient himself is going through a struggle or revolution, the effect of which is to purge him of his bad habits and vices. The underlying notion is expressed in his constant observation, "When a man is on the downward path and pulls himself up, he is a better man for his struggling and experience; he can tell others how to act."

The Chinese delusion is thus a process of *identification*. When he says his mind contains a Chinese spirit, he really means there are certain analogies between that nation and himself. He refers to the fact that cigarette smoking has stunted his growth, weakening his will-power; that he has been oppressed by others; that he has been allowed to drift on the downward path, a widow's son with no one to advise him, and so on.

Another form of persecution which requires elucidation is contained in the phrase, "*They concentrate moral agony on me.*" When analysed this exaggerated mode of expression is found to refer to the little difficulties in life to which every individual is subjected. Thus, he says, "It's persecution, spite and malice; I'm to be trodden down; it's not the thing in itself, it's cumulative; it's all this sense of injustice, the little personal, petty things. It's the side, swank, and swelled head of people which is agony to me. These things are trivial if you are not held down." The patient illustrates his expression by a wealth



of concrete details. They all consist of everyday worries common to every working man—little annoyances in the institution, a bullying foreman, low wages, inability to obtain work, little aches and pains. All these things, of course, assume traumatic significance because of his inability to react effectively to situations which present themselves.

We now come to the consideration of the patient's hallucinations and allied phenomena. These consist of actual "voices," "forced" thoughts which he refuses to acknowledge as his own, or sometimes actual dreams of a peculiarly vivid character. These experiences relate almost exclusively to his family. Thus the voices say to him, "Should his sister tell?" This refers to the fact that one of his sisters had a child before her marriage, and the voices are asking if she should acquaint her husband of the fact. Further associations of an intimate character are also aroused. The patient exhibits a strange dislike of his sister's husband, explaining it on trivial grounds. He states that on the day of her wedding he could not bring himself to attend the ceremony, but went off to work. The thought of the couple as man and wife caused a great disturbance in his mind. These thoughts lead back to other concrete reminiscences of childhood, relating to infantile experiences of a sexual character with his sister. The voices also accuse his mother and sister of being prostitutes, and we find that at the "drumhead trial," to which reference has been made, this is especially the taunt which was levelled at his head. When he says he had no defence against this accusation, the significance of the remark is obvious. The "bestiality" which is "forced" into him consists, in the main, of unveiled images of an incestuous nature. The content of these phenomena is again determined by definite experiences of childhood and youth. Owing to the narrowness of their circumstances, the patient occupied the same room as his mother, such a state of affairs persisting until after puberty. This naturally led to the development of premature sexual curiosity, impulses, and thoughts, which had a considerable influence upon the subsequent development of the patient.

Thus it is seen quite definitely that the hallucinations owe their origin to a series of infantile experiences. This aspect of the case will be referred to subsequently. For the moment it is sufficient to note the existence of what may be called the

“family complex,” which includes a series of sexual memories, with impulses or compulsive tendencies in a special direction.

Having now in some degree elicited the meaning of the persecutory delusions, some attention must be given to the expansive side of the psychosis. This aspect is not nearly so prominent as the persecutory. The patient speaks of the future with diffidence and reluctance, and he always follows his delusional assertions by the remark, “They can make me a liar if they wish, they can make these things hypnotic delusions.” The following associations denote the general trend of the ambitious phantasies: “The hypnotic war is to put Nature right again, afterwards I shall tell what I have learnt; I am the ultimate redemption which follows this bestiality, the transformation of the race will be done through me and doctors. The future is mental and moral redemption. They tell me the cause of epilepsy, consumption, and cancer. Not doing to others as they would be done by. Swank, I call it. The patient S. boasts that he has tobacco at 8d. an ounce; that boasting affects the mind and causes epilepsy. Epilepsy is not being decent to a man, it's being high and mighty; swank unbalances the nature. I shall have the inspiration, I shall be the master-power, and cure all this by saying the right thing. When I have omnipotent power I shall redeem things, I shall tell people what they need. They tell me I shall be king of kings, my mother will get freedom through me. I cannot do anything now, I am held down. As much moral force as I have had drawn away I shall have back again. My suggestion will be moral strength. They make me believe I shall have seven wives; seven is the natural number,” etc.

These expansive ideas are of considerable interest. They refer almost exclusively to the patient's endowment with knowledge and moral power, and they contain no reference to wealth, rank, and titles. He explains, “I shall be myself, plain S.” Even his reference to the king of kings only means superiority in a volitional and moral sense. The following examples indicate that he will be endowed more especially with qualities and attributes which he actually lacks.

(1) He will have “the inspiration”; after giving various mystical meanings of this he suddenly remarks, “It is complete concentration, a total loss of self, and a power of forgetting your surroundings. An engine-driver has the inspiration when

he sees the signals subconsciously ; his eyes are fixed in front, so that he can pull up directly with danger. A man who has that is a superman, he is just a perfect being, he could overcome trouble and sickness." This rather remarkable statement from an uneducated man expresses accurately the quality which he as a hesitating, perplexed, and ruminating individual had always lacked.

(2) He will "give society a good hiding by suggestion." He here means that he will be able to retaliate for his former rebuff in a manner he has hitherto lacked courage to do.

(3) A similar notion is expressed in his views on disease. He has for many years been preoccupied about his health, and thought he was consumptive, but he knows now it was due to "lack of will." He, therefore, generalises, and ascribes a mental causation to all maladies. "Cancer is due to puffing of the breast with pride. Habits which seem nothing lead to epilepsy. If I could speak my mind I could cure all these. They are due to little spiteful tricks." It is to be noticed that he lays stress on faults in others which have been especially irritating to his sensitive nature, so that when he talks of curing diseases the underlying thought is that he will reprove those who have annoyed him by their overbearing conduct.

(4) Somewhat cruder are his "wish-fulfilments" in regard to marriage. He is to have seven wives, his nature will be restored, etc. He goes on to show how he will produce children under perfect eugenic conditions ; but space forbids further reference to these notions. Such ideas are of obvious significance in a man who was obsessed by the thought that he was impotent.

Now though the ultimate psychological roots of the various delusional thoughts have probably not been completely elicited, sufficient material has been obtained from the analysis to justify certain conclusions. In the first place, it is seen that each delusional thought has numerous relations or associations which serve to indicate its special meaning and significance ; in the second place the special conflicts to which the patient had to adjust himself have been elicited ; and, in the third place, insight has been obtained into the constitutional characteristics of the patient, or the peculiar setting which constitutes the basis of the psychosis.

It is apparent that the character of the patient betrayed

abnormal traits from puberty. The patient grew up shy, diffident, and reserved. He lacked courage, was afraid to take any responsibility, and became increasingly unable to get into contact with his surroundings. Though troubled and unhappy, he felt unable to tell others of his difficulties, and he was keenly sensitive to his own incapacity. These constitutional deficiencies, taken together, represent what August Hoch has described as the "shut-in personality," and they are often found as the basis of dementia præcox.

Now in these defects of the personality I think we see what is best described as a failure in psycho-sexual evolution, using the term sexual in its widest sense. However one may hesitate to accept Freud's sexual theories in the schematic manner in which he presents them, there is no doubt that the sex-impulse or libido constitutes the most potent biological force in the individual, and further, that defects in its development lie at the root of many psycho-neurotic disturbances. I think we may also say that this libido or psycho-physical energy is not only expended in sexual activities, in their narrow sense, but flows outward, is sublimed into other channels, and becomes the motive force for the manifold activities of ordinary life. It is interesting to note how this notion was expressed by Mercier quite clearly some years ago. He says, referring to the development of sexual activity at puberty: "In man at this period not only does the special activity find ready outlet, since to him belongs by ancient and prescriptive custom the initiation of the overtures of love, but at the same period of life he is usually provided with abundant outlets for the general activities of his nature, which then receive so marked an accession to their vigour. . . . He can enter freely into clubs or societies of various kinds, can take up a special study or pursuit, a science or an art, and find in such pursuits channels of escape for the activities which are so copiously generated within him." At puberty, therefore, in the healthy individual the libido expresses itself by transference to objects outside his own family; the youth finds pleasure in mixed society, he falls in love, and so on; and also the impulse flows into other channels (sublimation), and becomes the motive for ambition and creative activities generally.

No such normal, healthy development is seen in the case of our patient. Before puberty the surroundings and circum-

stances of the patient had been of such a character as to arouse premature sexual tendencies in an abnormal direction. The normal affection for his mother and sisters became associated with concrete sexual desires, impulses, and curiosity, the significance of which it is impossible to ignore. With the growth of moral and ethical standards these impulses were submitted to a rigid repression, but the subsequent development of the patient indicates clearly that the free expression of the libido was hindered, the repressed impulses exerted an unconscious influence, and served to prevent a normal psycho-sexual evolution.

Then at puberty, though a normal intellectual development occurred in the volitional sphere, defects soon became apparent. These have already been detailed, and indicate a failure of sublimation. In the definitely sexual sphere there is a complete failure of transference to object love. He develops an abnormal shyness, and later a definite dislike for mixed society. This afterwards becomes almost an obsession, and he says: "I would walk a mile out of my way to avoid passing a woman." His conscious sexual life is confined to auto-erotic tendencies, vague fancies about women, and a morbid curiosity comprised under the expression "spying on lovers."

Now, in addition to these strangled sexual impulses, associated with a general volitional incapacity, indicative of a failure of transference and sublimation, certain special reactions indicate the specific influence of the "family complex." Thus all his life the patient had shown an abnormal bias towards his home, an undue dependence. His own words indicate this: "Home is final, there is nothing past that; you are your own master, your thoughts are at rest, it's always a refuge for me; a chap who couldn't fend for himself and has to depend on home if he is turned out is practically killed." Another reaction indicative of the abnormal kind is seen in his dislike of his brother-in-law. When analysed this feeling was shown to be due to jealousy associated with childish experiences which have been already detailed.

The delusional content shows the influence of this complex still more clearly. Not only is this the case in the hallucinations, the peculiar content of which has been described, but also in numerous fantastic notions relating to the patient's mother. The following is characteristic: "The hypnotic

spirits mix me up with my mother; they pervade me with her consciousness. They make me think she is mother-earth. The earth has consciousness; they will give my mother consciousness of the thoughts which are forced into my mind. There is special enmity to my family." These thoughts are very obscure, but they obviously mean a mystical union of the souls of his mother and himself; a realisation on his part of the peculiar thoughts he has about her, and also a general tendency to place her on an exalted plane.

It has been necessary to consider the personality of the patient in some detail, because without such knowledge the significance of the psychosis is quite obscure. It is clear that the psychosis does not depend on any notably severe external stresses, but rather upon defects in the make-up of the patient, which prevented him from reacting effectively to ordinary situations. The patient aptly expresses his own defect in the phrase "I never grew up." This is quite true. While his intellectual growth was probably beyond the average, the development of his libido, that "life force" which serves to create healthy external interests, and forces an individual into contact with the world, was hindered and unable to find free expression. Thus the patient becomes a solitary, brooding figure; nourishing ambitions he cannot gratify, and isolated in a world which must of necessity assume an aspect hostile and malignant. This is the soil upon which the psychosis develops. The delusional phantasy is a method of compensation—it is a substitute for efficient action.

A brief review of the content of the psychosis will make this clear. In the first place there is the mechanism of wish-fulfilment. The shy, diffident, hypochondriacal youth, afraid of responsibility, unable to retaliate and conscious of his own incapacity, is to become the great healer by moral force, he is to purge society, he is to transform the world into a Utopia and put right those social conditions against which he has struggled so ineffectively. He is to have "the inspiration"—perfect efficiency. In the sexual sphere his strangled impulses become fantastically realised, and we find "he outrages females by hypnotic transference." His auto-erotic fancies assume a definitely illusory form, and he becomes endowed with the "face and form of a woman." How his suppressed incestuous impulses force their way into consciousness in the form of

hallucinations and obscure delusional thoughts has already been described ; and on a more elevated plane of thought the patient pictures himself as the father of a numerous healthy progeny, born and bred under perfect eugenic conditions.

In the second place there is the mechanism of projection. The analysis has shown that the patient ascribes to some external agency all his feelings of incapacity, all his inferior attributes and qualities, and all his thoughts and desires which do not harmonize with his ethical and moral standards. Such thoughts and feelings are not his at all, his real personality is the one which is "held down," the perfect being which will emerge at the termination of the hypnotic war. This method of adjustment is no more than an exaggeration of a mechanism which is common enough in everyday life. The incompetent man is always ready to regard himself as the victim of circumstances ; because in this way he avoids looking into his own mind, and discovering the painful fact that his failure results from his own inefficiency. It is obvious that an elaborate, persecutory, delusional scheme may originate in this manner. This mechanism is of particular interest in regard to hallucinations. An individual refuses to acknowledge these isolated images as belonging to himself because they are out of harmony with the general trend of his personality. Thus, one of my patients, who was afflicted with "voices" which made amusing but vulgar remarks to her, denied strenuously that they could be her own thoughts, because she could never under any circumstances entertain such coarse notions. In the same way one patient not only gratifies his less creditable desires, but he is able to absolve himself of all responsibility in the matter. Instead of struggling against his thoughts, he can now give himself up to them, and he is able to explain in a detached and complacent manner that they do not belong to his own personality at all.

Lastly, we see in this delusional phantasy the erection of a pretentious philosophic scheme which serves as a complete substitute for an incapacity in action. Such a defensive mechanism is quite usual. Individuals who fail to adjust themselves to reality often tend to fall back into rumination upon the meanings of things, and are apt to adopt a pretentious manner of speech. I cannot refrain from giving an excellent example in one of my own patients who has shown an in-

creasing incapacity to manage his own affairs. He is now becoming very superior and detached, and recently he wrote as follows: "In a world in which nothing is an indefinite something there is much ground for hope, and one may view with calmness the progress towards final night of those who use distributed negatives to inconceivability, and betake oneself to a cold peak of learning which sees humanity concluded under a barren negative; and like the wayfaring man to formulate the advance of a nation of strong negatives over a nation of weak positives in such a way as to cause the influx of a united people of a far continent." There is no doubt that these phrases seem perfectly rational to the writer himself, though the actual relation between the words and the concrete thoughts they are designed to express is decidedly obscure. They certainly give him a great deal of pleasure and infuse him with a delicious sense of intellectual superiority.

This superior attitude is very obvious in our patient, and it is readily understood how, detached from the external world of reality, he naturally fell back into the contemplation of all kinds of obscure subjects—social problems, religion, hypnotism, the yellow peril—which afforded all the necessary material for the psychosis. The less efficient the patient becomes the more his ego expands, and eventually he feels that he has arrived at the solution of every problem which presents itself. From a state of uneasy rumination and doubt he has attained a position of positive belief, and he is able to watch the fruitless struggles of his fellow-creatures with an air of complacent detachment. As the patient interprets his own actions, so he interprets those of other people. He sees in humanity a mass of struggling souls, manipulated by an unseen force, each striving against the other—a topsy-turvy world which he alone can put right. Thus prevented by defects in his personality from an energetic application to reality, and unable to mould his circumstances in accordance with his desires, the patient gratifies his inner tendencies by the construction of a delusional phantasy. The psychosis has therefore a definite biological significance, analogous to other inferior mental operations in normal mental life. It is a method of adjustment by means of which the patient attains a state of equilibrium, and compensates himself for a life of conflict and failure.

<sup>1</sup>) A paper read at the Section of Psychiatry, Royal Society of Medicine.